

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6015

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT JA

SUBJECT: PROGRESS TOWARD RESUMPTION OF DIET DELIBERATIONS

REF: TOKYO 10061

SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE MADE
PROGRESS IN RECENT DISCUSSIONS AIMED AT RESUMPTION OF DIET
BUSINESS. PROSPECT IS THAT DELIBERATIONS MAY RESUME AGAIN
AS EARLY AS AUG 20. END SUMMARY

1. AS REPORTED REFTEL, NEW ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS TO
NORMALIZE DIET GOT UNDERWAY WITH RETURN OF PRIMIN TANAKA
FROM UNITED STATES. FIRST SIGNIFICANT STEP FORWARD CAME ON
AUG 10 WHEN LDP AND OPPOSITION PARTIES AGREED TO MEDIATION
PLAN OFFERED BY LOWER HOUSE SPEAKER SHIGESABURO MAEO.
ACCORDING TO MAEO PROPOSAL, BUSINESS DURING BALANCE OF
CURRENT EXTENDED DIET SESSION WILL FOCUS ON DISPOSITION OF
MAJOR BILLS NOW IN HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS. TREATMENT OF BILLS
IN LOWER HOUSE WILL BE LIMITED TO COMMITTEE DISCUSSION.
HE ALSO CALLED FOR LDP-OPPOSITION DISCUSSIONS IN LOWER
HOUSE LOOKING TOWARD REFORM OF DIET MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

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FINALLY, MAEO PROPOSED THAT LDP AND OPPOSITION LEADERS

IN UPPER HOUSE CONDUCT INFORMAL TALKS AIMED AT RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS IN THAT BODY. IN ACCEPTING THESE PROPOSALS, CONCERNED PARTIES AGREED LOWER HOUSE DELIBERATIONS WOULD RESUME AS SOON AS DECISION REACHED ON RESUMPTION HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS PROCEEDINGS.

2. IN KEEPING WITH MEDIATION PROPOSALS, LDP AND OPPOSITION MEMBERS OF UPPER HOUSE STEERING COMMITTEE HELD INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS ON AUG 13. LDP STUCK TO ITS POSITION THAT FORCED APPROVAL OF KEY BILLS IN UPPER HOUSE COMMITTEES WAS LEGITIMATE PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE AND THAT BILLS SHOULD BE PROMPTLY TAKEN UP IN PLENARY SESSION. OPPOSITION COUNTERED WITH ASSERTION BILLS SHOULD BE RETURNED TO COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION, CRITICIZED LDP FOR FORCED DIET EXTENSION, AND SOUGHT ASSURANCES THAT THERE WOULD BE NO MORE ONE-SIDED VOTES. DESPITE THESE SETPIECE ARGUMENTS, HOWEVER, EACH SIDE ALSO SOUNDED OUT OTHER ON POSITIONS CONCERNING POSSIBILITIES FOR BREAK IN UPPER HOUSE DEADLOCK. ACCORDING PRESS, LDP ESPECIALLY SHOWED SIGNS OF MORE FLEXIBLE ATTITUDE. FORMAL HOUSE OF COUNCILLORS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING WAS SET FOR AUG 14.

3. COMMENT: IT APPEARS THAT DIET ACTIVITY WILL RESUME IN NEAR FUTURE. THOSE SUPPOSEDLY IN KNOW SAY ABOUT AUG 20. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT, IN FACT, NORMALIZATION UNDERSTANDING ALREADY REACHED AND THAT DESIRE OF DIET MEMBERS TO RETURN HOME FOR OBON HOLIDAY, RATHER THAN POLITICAL CONSIDERATION, IS REAL REASON FOR FURTHER DELAY IN RESUMPTION OF DIET BUSINESS.
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